Remarks/Arguments:

I. Introduction

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1-5 and 7 will remain pending in this application. Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define aspects of the invention. Based on the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,452,316 to Panek in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,430,184 to Acord. The Examiner states that Panek discloses an electrical connector comprising a store-side part and an aircraft-side part and having the claimed elements, but concedes that Panek does not disclose a store or an aircraft/dispenser. The Examiner asserts, however, that Acord discloses a store (11) and an aircraft/dispenser (12) with a connector (17, 18) connecting the two and that it would have been obvious to use the Panek device with an aircraft and store (stating that Panek discloses a quick and positive breakdown between the mating connectors, characteristics required for aircraft/store releasing operations as taught in Acord). Applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection and requests reconsideration and withdrawal thereof.

A. The Panek reference does not disclose a threaded clamping ring

First, the Examiner compares the Panek inner shell 15 to the claimed threaded clamping ring. However, Panek does not disclose a threaded clamping ring threadingly engaged with the core and by which the outer shell is clamped to the core as currently claimed. Inner shell 15 (described at Panek col. 3, lines 1-15) is not threadingly engaged with the core (characterized by the Examiner as reference numerals 7, 30, 9, and 16).

Instead, the Panek core appears to be integrally molded within the inner shell 15 about an inwardly protruding ridge (which is unreferenced in the Figures).

Moreover, the Panek inner shell 15 does not serve to clamp the outer shell to the core. Instead, the end bell or back shell 16 serves to retain the outer shell assembly on the core. However, if the end bell or back shell 16 is regarded as a part of the core as suggested by the Examiner, the inner shell 15 must likewise be regarded as a part of the core too, since it appears to have item 7 integrally molded within it. The shell 15 is therefore not distinct and separate from the core as currently claimed. (In fact, if any portion is separate from the core, it is the back shell 16 that is connected to the shell 15. The back shell 16, however, is not a clamping ring, but instead forms a complete cover for the right-hand part of the core assembly as illustrated.)

B. The Panek reference does not disclose an outer shell adapted to be *removed from* the core from the forward end on *disassembly*

Even in light of these arguments, in an abundance of cooperation and in the interest of advancing the prosecution of this application, claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the outer shell is adapted to be removed from the core from the forward end on disassembly. Support for the amendment appears in the figures, as well as at page 2, where it is described that the outer shell of the aircraft-side half is readily replaceable without disturbing the cable or its electrical connections to the core of the aircraft-side half.

As is clearly apparent from Figure 1, for example, if the outer shell assembly 50 were arranged for removal from the core 14 to the left, in the direction opposite to the electrical contacts 52 and hence opposite to the first direction, the shell components 24, 26, 28, 30 would move over and surround the electrical cable 54 or other electrical connection extending between the aircraft-side connector part and the aircraft or dispenser. The shell components would remain trapped there unless the cable 54 or other electrical connection were disconnected from the core or the aircraft or the store dispenser, since the central apertures in the components 24, 26, 28 and 30 are too small for them to pass over the aircraft or store dispenser. Therefore, the outer shell component or assembly must be adapted for

removal from the forward end of the aircraft-side connector part as currently specified in claim 1, in order to permit removal without disturbance of the electrical connections to the core as described. The final sentence of the description at page 5 also provides support for this claim feature, referring to simple replacement of the mechanical retention mechanism (constituted by the core components, since they snap-engage the store-side connector part), without the need to remove electrical contacts.

By contrast, the outer shell of the Panek reference is retained on the inner shell and core by a flange 20 engaging a retainer ring 19 on the inner shell 15. The outer shell is engaged on the other side by the end bell 16 (*see, e.g.*, Fig. 2; col. 3, lines 1-15). As illustrated, the retainer ring 19 is retained on the inner shell 15 by a raised shoulder to the forward (left) side. Thus, the outer shell assembly cannot be removed from the inner shell and core in the forward (leftward) direction. Even if the retainer ring 19 were a split ring (and Panek contains no such disclosure or suggestion of such a feature), access to the retainer ring 19 for expansion and removal over the leftward shoulder is prevented by the overlying collar 18.

Therefore, the Panek reference fails to disclose or suggest an outer shell which is adapted for removal from a core from the forward end (in a forward direction, i.e. over the electrical contacts and away from the electrical cable) on disassembly. Instead, removal of the outer shell assembly disclosed in Panek apparently requires that the end bell or back shell 16 be unscrewed from the inner shell 15 and moved to the right over the electrical cable 9. This then allows withdrawal of the tang collar 18 and the remainder of the outer shell assembly to the right or over the back end (i.e., not from the forward end) over the electrical cable 9. Complete removal and replacement of the outer shell assembly therefore entails disconnection of the electrical cable 9.

By contrast, the present invention allows servicing or replacement of the outer shell assembly without disturbing the connection of the electrical cable. Accordingly, it is believed that currently presented claims clearly distinguish over the Panek reference for at

least the above reasons, both when taken alone or when read in combination with the Acord reference.

CONCLUSION

For at least the above reasons, Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 1-5 and 7 and issuance of a patent containing these claims in due course. If there remain any additional issues to be addressed, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned attorney at 404.815.6147.

Respectfully submitted,

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